

# SC015254

Registered provider: Castle Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by a private company, offers care for up to five males at any one time, between the ages of eight to 18. The home seeks to provide specialist care in the treatment of children who have or are considered likely to present harmful sexual behaviours. The emphasis of the work is by way of intervention to challenge the inappropriate behaviour.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2012.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 28 to 29 June 2021

|                                                                                           |                    |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 19 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 19/02/2020      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 06/08/2018      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 31/08/2017      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 13/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff provide exceptional-quality care that has transformed the children's lives. The staff have supported the children to develop trusting relationships, which has enabled the children to heal and recover from their past experiences.

An in-house therapist works with each child to reflect on, understand and positively work through the child's emotions and feelings. Following weekly therapy sessions, the therapist guides the staff to undertake related workshops with the children. This joined-up support enables the children to make significant progress with their behavioural, emotional and social needs.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved on from the home to semi-independent living and two have moved into the home. Detailed impact assessments are undertaken and thoughtful moves take place. This helps the children to feel secure and to settle into their new placements quickly.

Staff are strong advocates and ensure that the children's voices are heard. For one child, the staff recognised that his care planning has not been good enough. Together with the child's independent advocate, the staff have supported the child to make a complaint and have continued to escalate concerns to ensure that he receives the support that he is entitled to.

Staff are ambitious for children to achieve in their education and academic attainment. Staff support children with their reading, applications to college and to undertake part-time work. This has led to children achieving their potential. For some children, this has meant securing college courses in their chosen interests. Staff helped another child to enrol on A-level courses and plan for university.

Children benefit from creative activities and opportunities to engage with their local community. These have included camping holidays, trips to theme parks, local hobbies and fundraising events for local charities. In addition, the children provide care for a group of ducks and chickens that they have rescued from battery farms. These activities enable children to develop and practise their social skills and understand how to contribute positively to society.

The children recognise the difference that living at the home has made to their lives. They said that they are listened to, respected and involved in decisions about their care and the home. Consequently, children are upbeat, relaxed and hopeful about their futures.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Staff support children to be aware of their own safety, both inside and outside the home. They do this by undertaking a variety of individual and group-based activities. An example is the monthly 'bully buster' sessions, during which staff explore recent incidents with children and reflect on how they can be positively managed. Staff help children to understand safe internet use and how to make informed choices while allowing them to be responsible in their use. This skilful approach helps children to feel trusted to take risks and learn how to protect themselves from harm.

The staff know the children well. It is these positive relationships that have created a culture of openness that encourages children to be able to speak with staff if they have any worries or concerns about their safety. Consequently, restraints are not used, sanctions are rare and there have been no episodes of children going missing from the home since the last inspection.

The staff recognise the importance of sharing information and effective communication. This helps them to provide consistent care and clear boundaries for children. The staff do this by managing negative behaviours fairly. Staff invite children to reflect on behaviour management strategies used and to consider how they can behave differently in the future. This collaborative approach encourages the children to take ownership of their actions and experience consequences that are meaningful to them.

The manager provides strong oversight of all behavioural and safeguarding incidents. She has devised regular safeguarding meetings to review how safeguarding policies are implemented at the home. This ensures that safeguarding systems are effective and the high quality of practice is maintained.

The children have risk assessments that are up to date and individualised. The staff record overviews of the children's needs and specific strategies to protect them from harm. Some of the details, however, have not always been diligently recorded. In addition, not all staff have had specialist training around some of the children's

emerging risks. This means that staff could miss important information on how best to manage these behaviours.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager has been in post since 2012. Her longevity at the home has established stable leadership and enabled her to realise a clear vision for the home. She has formed a diverse staff team with a range of interests, skills and experiences. The manager encourages staff to share their interests with children. The children have, therefore, learned a range of skills from the practical, such as building bird boxes, to learning how to knit and sew. These skills and experiences enrich the children's lives.

Staff value the manager's commitment, skills and knowledge. They feel well supported by her. This has created a positive team culture and a permanent stable workforce that provides children with consistent care.

The manager and staff are committed to improving their practice. Regular team meetings are opportunities to reflect on latest research and evidence-based approaches. Staff take it in turns to present their findings to the rest of the team and consider what this means for the care that they provide. The manager has shown innovation in driving continuous improvements and progress. One example of this is the virtual children's guide. Children, parents and professionals can experience what it is like living at the home by exploring all the rooms and gardens remotely. This technology can significantly reduce children's and family's anxieties.

The manager prioritises the promotion of tolerance and diversity. She creates enjoyable activities and themed cultural events for the children to regularly participate in. At the time of the inspection, staff and children had just celebrated Pride Month, during which the staff held a party and encouraged positive conversations with the children about diversity. This enables children to broaden their knowledge and tolerance of different identities and lifestyle choices.

The manager has strong monitoring systems in place. As well as using external monitoring reports and regular care reviews, the manager undertakes regular lessons-learned briefings and multi-agency practice discussions. This level of critical reflection helps the manager to identify the practice strengths and areas of development effectively.

The feedback from parents and professionals has been unanimously positive. They recognise the staff's commitment to creating a nurturing home. They can see how the children have thrived in the home's care and what a significant difference the staff have made to children's lives.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate resources to support their training needs and understand the key role that they play in the training and development of staff at the home. In particular, ensure that staff have access to specialist training to understand substance misuse and mental health needs of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Specifically, ensure that staff accurately record the warning signs and triggers that children may be at risk and the specific detail of strategies to manage and reduce any risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

### **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC015254

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Castle Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

**Responsible individual:** Leon Brandon

**Registered manager:** Helen Llewellyn

### **Inspector**

Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

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